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See No Evil, Hear No Evil: Senior Leaders' Social Comparisons, and the Low Salience of Racial Issues

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ABSTRACT

Four hypotheses are proposed and tested to investigate the role of social comparison as an influence on the extent to which racial issues are salient to senior military leaders. Working from an informational interdependence perspective, it is argued that by virtue of their demographic and hierarchical isolation, senior military leaders rely on social comparison to make assessments of the racial climate in their units. For a variety of reasons, these subjective social comparisons are favorable, reducing the salience of racial issues for senior leaders in their units. Test of hypotheses using factor analysis, correlations, and regression techniques confirmed the presence and predicted influence of social comparison. Recommendations are offered for intervention.

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